

Welcome, everybody, to this particular seventh-day Sabbath.

The title of today's sermon is *To Be A Servant*.

Mankind does not know the reason why they were created, but we, those called by God out of the world into the Body of Christ, the Church of God, we have been called to fulfill a role of service. By nature, as far as our inner thinking, we desire to be served and not to serve others. That's our base human nature.

To truly serve, to be a servant requires humility. It requires God's thinking. To be a servant means we are willing to sacrifice the self for the benefit of others. What do people think about the role of a servant? So, if you mention this word "servant" in today's society, it is not viewed as the highest honor that someone could achieve. It's actually thought to be something "less," someone that is lesser. To be a servant generally is looked down on. The word "slave" is also a word that is now condemned and it is looked down on by mankind. Yet God says the opposite. God says the greatest honor that we could have as a human is to be a servant. And the word "servant" really is "to be a slave," "to give ourselves over to serve somebody else," to be a slave for somebody else.

So we can see how the world has taken what God has said to be an honor into something that is looked down on and is frowned on and is misused and misapplied.

To be a servant is one of the greatest honors anybody can achieve on a spiritual level. This is one of the greatest things that a human can achieve, yet mankind would say that to be a servant would be you're lowly paid and you are virtually "less than" the person that is being served.

The purpose of this sermon, as we move towards and into the Days of Unleavened Bread, is to examine what it means to be a servant of God.

We're going to start in **Hebrews 2:1-10**, so if you'd like to turn to Hebrews 2:1. And previously we had covered Hebrews 1 where it talked about the angelic realm being ministers or servants to us, those who will inherit salvation. **Therefore, we, brethren, those who have been called, must give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we drift away.** So what that's really saying is that what is it that we have heard? Well, we've heard the truth in the Church. It's talking about the truth, the truth of God. We need to be careful (to be aware) that we can fall away, drift away, or slip away from the truth, from God Himself. And that's what it's really warning us about, that we need to "give more earnest heed to what we have heard" in God's Church because we can lose this. We can let it slip.

How and why would we drift away? Well, it's by neglect, by *spiritual* neglect. We can become unthankful for our calling. We become familiar with what God has given us as a gift. So how is it that we can be unthankful for something that God has given us? By our attitude of complacency. And that's how unthankfulness is revealed. It comes out in an attitude, and it really starts with this complacent spirit. We become *familiar* with what we have. And that can happen on a physical level, but it can also happen on a spiritual level, that we can drift away on a spiritual level because we're not giving "more earnest heed." We're not being really diligent about what we have been given, the things we have heard that

God has placed into the Church, which is the truth and all the aspects of the truth, all of God's ways that we have learned, that we have heard. And we need to be careful not to let those things drift away from us, which they can.

**For if the word spoken through the angels proved steadfast,** which in other words says, "was accurate," **and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,** which was "a righteous judgement, a righteous penalty" that was paid. Another way of saying that is, "If the old message delivered by the angels was valid and nobody got away with anything" – that's what it's really saying, "Nobody gets away with anything!" Every transgression, every act of disobedience, whether it's in the mind or comes out in an action, will receive a just reward. There is a penalty for sin and we understand that. Unless it's repented of, "the wages of sin is death."

**Verse 3 – how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,** so this is referring to this *neglect*, and this neglect is *by our own choice*. We have to choose to neglect something. So if we hear the truth we have to then make a decision, what will we do with the truth? Will we continue in it? Or will we choose to neglect it, become complacent, and take it for granted? **...which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,** talking about Christ. And that was, of course, the apostles. First of all, it was delivered in person by Christ, then accurately passed on to us by those who heard it from Jesus Christ. And of course, that's referring to the apostles and this is Paul relaying this to the Hebrews.

**Verse 4 – God also bearing witness,** and this is "providing evidence by joining together." So this is about the combining of things together. It comes from God to Christ then to the apostles and now to the Hebrews. So it's this combining together, this bearing witness by **both signs and wonders, with various miracles and gifts of the holy spirit, according to His (God's) own will?** So it's all according to God's will and purpose, the way that God is working within the Church.

"How shall we escape after seeing all this *evidence*?" That's what it's really saying. "How should we escape after all this evidence that has been provided?" Well, "What evidence?" We could say, "What evidence do we have?" Well, our calling, brethren, is evidence of God working with us. The *knowledge* that we have been given and the *understanding* on a spiritual level of the truth, this is all *evidence* of where God is working and it's all being done according to God's will.

**Verse 5 – For He (God) has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.** Which is to "arrange under" the angels. So the world to come is not going to be placed under the rulership of the angels, but we understand, under Jesus Christ and the 144,000 in the beginning, and then under those that are changed to spirit, from mankind to spirit.

**Verse 6 – But one testified in a certain place,** this is referring to David, **saying: What is man,** "What is human beings," **that You (God) are mindful of him (of mankind), or the son of man that You take care of him?** And this word, "to take care of" is "to look upon in order to help or to benefit, to look after, have care for, provide for." Now, does that sound familiar to the word "servant"? Because God *is* the greatest servant. He is the one that sacrifices for us to give us something, which is life-everlasting in Elohim.

So He looks upon us in order to serve us (to help, to benefit, to look after, to care for, to provide for). God has a plan to save mankind from what he is. Mankind is selfish and desires to be served and God

has a plan as a servant to support us, to bring us to salvation so that we can become servants just like Him.

**Verse 7 – You (God) have made him (mankind) a little lower than the angels.** Mankind was not made as spirit. Angels were made and composed of spirit. But man wasn't. He was made physical, mortal, and therefore, that is the main difference. One is spirit and the other one is not. Now mankind's potential, and what God has planned for mankind, has yet to be completed.

Going on in verse 7 – **You (God) have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands,** over the creation. **You (God) have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He (God) put all things in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is not* put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.** What it's saying is that God has a plan to put all things under mankind, but it hasn't happened yet. This actually has not taken place yet. It's talking about mankind once he has changed to spirit and placed under God and Jesus Christ in authority.

**Verse 9 – But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,** because He was made a man. Why was He made a man? **...for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.** He is the firstborn from the dead, **that He (Christ) by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.** Jesus Christ was created to serve. God sacrificed His only begotten Son for all mankind. So here it is. *God* is the greatest servant because God served or He achieved something. He gave something up – which is what service is about. We're to give something up for the benefit of all mankind – and He gave His only begotten Son for all mankind.

God Himself is the greatest servant of all. God serves us. He sacrificed *for* us and He still does today. He sacrifices *for* us. God gives up so much so that we can have Elohim. God sacrificed peace so that we could have life everlasting. Incredible sacrifices that God has given!

**Verse 10 – For it was fitting for Him, for (or through) whom *are* all things and by (or through) whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the captain of their salvation (Jesus Christ) perfect through suffering.** “Perfect” means “brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to be completed.” So it is actually a complete work that has been achieved. It has all been achieved and fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ. Nothing has been left out by the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

All this was planned and accomplished so that we could have life *in Elohim*.

If you'd like to turn to **1 Peter 1:3-9 – Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again,** begotten, that is, to a living hope, God's spirit *in* us is what gives us this “living hope,” **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.** So this hope that we have has been made possible by God *through* the resurrection of Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is *alive*. And because of God's spirit living and dwelling in us we have been begotten by God's spirit and so we have this “living hope” living and dwelling in us because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ **...to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,** so it is God that does it all. He is the one that is doing it all for us.

**Verse 5 – who are kept,** and that word is “guarded.” How does this happen? **...by the power of God through faith – why? – for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,** which is going to be

revealed. Our salvation is going to be revealed at the return of Jesus Christ because we know there is 144,000 that are going to be resurrected to Elohim, to spirit at that time.

**Verse 6 – In this**, in being called to serve and the promise of a future life with God, **you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while**, and this is because it's temporary and it's passing away, **if need be**, in other words, what is best for us on a spiritual level, **you have been grieved by various trials**. So we are grieved. We are *tested* and *proved* by these various trials, because that is our purpose *of life*, because this is how God will establish *in us* His character. It's through these trials, these testing's and proving.

**Verse 7 – So why** are we being tested this way? ...**that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire**, so this is how we grow spiritually, is by this testing, **may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your lives**. We are tested in life to see if we will serve others. Will we be a *servant* or will we *seek to serve ourselves*?

And that's what a lot of the testing and trialing is about. It's about developing this attitude, this mindset of sacrificing, which is serving, to be a servant. Our faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has and still is serving us today in loving ways, which is a sacrificing love – if we can come to see and understand on a spiritual level the great mercy and love of God that He has bestowed on us, on a spiritual level we will see *why* we should serve, *why* we should be desiring to be servants of the Eternal Living God. Because that's what it's about. Life is about becoming a *servant* of Yahweh Elohim, a servant of God. Because that's what our calling is about, to be a servant.

**Psalm 103:1** – a Psalm of David. **Bless**, or praise, **the LORD, O my life**, and this is referring to the inner thinking that is within our minds. So it's about the way that we think. It's an attitude that has developed in our mind of whether or not we praise God, whether we bless God or worship God. It all comes from our inner thinking, the choice that we have made. **And all that is within me**, this inner being, **bless His holy name!** Bless God's holy name, praise God's holy name.

So how do we do that? We place God first in everything. So if we ever say that we want to praise God or bless God (which the word is used in English, but it's really "praise God"), it's done by our attitude and it all comes from our inner thinking and it's done by placing God first in all things. So this is how we demonstrate that we love God. It's by placing God first because it's about a priority in our life.

**Verse 2 - Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits**. So let's not ignore His benefits. All the things that God has done for us on a spiritual level are His (God's) benefits. Now, these benefits are listed so that we can consider them, to be thankful for them, and reveal why we should desire with all our being to *be* servants of God. Because now these benefits that God has given us are outlined.

**Verse 3** – And the first one is: **Who forgives all our iniquities**. God forgives our sins. So this is an *enormous* benefit. And how does it come about? Well, it comes about by God providing Jesus Christ as a means to cover sin, which covers why Passover exists, why God established Passover – so that our sins could be forgiven. But the greatest attribute here is that God is *forgiving*. That is His attribute. That is His character. And He is willing and desires to forgive all our sins.

Now, human nature isn't that way. Human nature doesn't really desire to forgive. It desires to *get even!* And that's an attribute of a natural carnal mind. But God's desire is that He desires to forgive. He desires repentance from humans. When we're called into the Body of Christ, the Church of God, and given God's spirit, we have that ability to repent, and God desires to forgive...and this is an act of *service*. Forgiving is an act of service. And that's how God serves us, our greatest servant.

Number two: **Who heals all our diseases.** And this is both physically and also spiritually. And of course, the spiritual is more important. We are diseased because of sin and God says that He is willing to *heal* our minds, and that's where sin comes from, within our inner thinking. But over time God heals our minds and it's called "conversion."

If you'd like to hold your place there we're going to look at this principle in 2 Corinthians 12. So hold your place there in Psalm 103. **2 Corinthians 12:1-10 – It is doubtless,** and that word really is "therefore," **not profitable for me to boast,** but necessary for a spiritual purpose. So Paul is saying here that he shouldn't be boasting and he doesn't really want to boast, but he's going to say this or make these statements because it's of spiritual benefit to the hearer, not that he's doing it because of pride. **...I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ,** and of course, he's referring to himself here, **who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body** (in other words, in a vision) **I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up into the third heaven.** The third heaven is where God dwells or where the spirit realm is now.

**Verse 3 – And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — how he was caught up into paradise,** this is the spirit realm, **and heard inexpressible** (or unspeakable) **words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.** So they can't be repeated. So here it is that Paul cannot repeat these words.

**Verse 5 – For such a one I will boast,** and he's going to talk about it now, **yet of myself I will not boast.** He doesn't take any credit to himself for it, takes no credit that he did anything as God did it all. So he understands now that it wasn't about Paul, the man, it was God that did it all, **except in my infirmities.** Now he's going to talk about it, about his tests and trials and his weaknesses.

**Verse 6 – For though I might desire to boast,** use his carnal thinking, **I will not be a fool,** because that's what he would be if he was using his natural carnal mind. He's not going to take any credit to self because God gave him all knowledge, and any knowledge that he has on a spiritual level all came from God **...for I will speak the truth. But I will refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears of me.** So Paul is not going to exalt himself in his thinking because he doesn't want others to exalt *him* in their thinking either.

Too much knowledge is not good for some as it triggers pride. Paul is striving to not have others think *he* is some type of spiritual giant. All credit must be given to God for *all things*.

**Verse 7 – And lest I should be exalted,** lifted up in that thinking that he is special, better than others, **above measure by the abundance of the revelations,** what God *had* done and what God *has* done, what God *did* to benefit Paul on a spiritual level. So this is now Paul explaining that he has this problem in his life and it's been given to him by God to keep him humble, **a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.** So this problem that he has, has been given to him and allowed to remain with Paul because it's going to keep him humble – all for the

purpose to keep Paul humble, spiritually focused. And that's the important part, to remain spiritually focused is the key.

**Verse 8 – Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.**

**Verse 9 – And He said to me, My grace, My favor, is sufficient for you, for My strength,** power, spiritual strength, **is made perfect,** made complete, **in weakness,** in physical weakness. God cannot work with us if we are not humble. God works with the humble. The best thing for us is to remain humble even if it is achieved by and through infirmities, physical sickness, physical issues in our life, because God then can work with the humble. Because if we have physical infirmity (or weaknesses) we're less likely to raise ourselves up thinking that we are something special. Because we know pride puffs up, and if anything (we take to ourselves), it's a level of pride and we lift ourselves up to view others less than us. And if we view others "less than" us, could we be servants? Have we got the right attitude to serve others if we think we're *better* than others? Well, the natural carnal mind thinks it *is* better than others – that's normal, that's natural; therefore, the natural carnal mind despises servants or despises or doesn't desire to serve. But with the humble (with God's spirit) can desire to serve, to lower the self to become a servant, to understand the spiritual principle of what a true servant is. To be a "slave of God" or a "servant of God" is what life is about for us.

**Verse 9 – Therefore, most assuredly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** It's about God dwelling in him. So he's being kept humble for the purpose of God dwelling (living) in him, God and Christ living in him. **Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,** so he's willing to suffer, **in reproaches,** and that "reproaches" there is insults which are given to him or given to God's people, **in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, physically, then I am strong,** strong spiritually because God dwells in us. So this is a matter of pride versus humility.

If we remain proud or have pride God can't live in us. And if we're proud, we can't *serve* – not in the right attitude, not in a Godly way – because God can't dwell with pride. And it's God that does the works; therefore, to truly be a servant requires God's holy spirit, and therefore, if we have pride we *can't serve*, because it's God that does the works of service. When we choose to serve it has to be motivated by God's spirit. But if we are humble and God dwells in us *then* we can fulfill the role of a servant. If we are humble and God dwells in us we can serve *others*. It's an incredible process. So it's pride and not being a servant, or it's humility and being a servant of God.

We should not be disappointed if God chooses not to heal our physical bodies because the spiritual healing is what is important to God. So if we are to do spiritual works, we have to remain humble, and sometimes the best thing that can happen to us is something physical – in the sense of a weakness or whatever happens in our life – that causes us to stop and not raise ourselves up. Because when we raise ourselves up we cannot be servants of God and servants of others, to serve others.

So it's through these trials and tests that God often works and He doesn't always heal our physical weaknesses because we can be spiritually strong in those physical weaknesses. Because God can dwell in us, well, that's what makes us strong.

God can use physical matters to help us spiritually. And these things are all taken into the view of, "All things work together for the good." Because often our physical weaknesses have and produce the ability

for God to live and dwell in us. Paul is stating that he is willing to suffer *anything* if it means or enables God to dwell in him because it's God that does the works.

Back to **Psalm 103:4** – Now, this is the third benefit: **Who redeems your life from destruction**, from death. Now, the word “redeem” there is “pays a ransom for,” because really we were held captive (in bondage) to our own natural carnal mind and also because of Satan's thinking that is broadcast to us. Well, we have to be bought back. We have to be purchased. Well, we were purchased by God through Jesus Christ. So God paid a *ransom* for us and that is one of *His* great acts of service, is by paying a ransom for us, redeeming us back, redeeming us *from* this destruction which we have earned – death. “The wages of sin is death.” So this destruction that we have brought on ourselves, God says He is going to redeem us, bring us back *from* this destruction. It is achieved through Christ, our Redeemer.

**Verse 4 – Who crowns**, and that word really is “surrounds,” **you with loving kindness and tender mercies**, and this is saying, “This loving compassion that God has, this is something we do not deserve. We deserve death.” But God surrounds us with His loving kindness, who He is, and His tender mercies; God is merciful to us. We don't deserve it, but that's the way God is. God is love, and He is merciful.

**Verse 5** – And that covers the next benefit, which is the fifth benefit: **Who satisfies your mouth with good things**, and they are, of course, the only thing “good” is spiritual food. And what is that spiritual food that is good? The truth. **So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's**. So we can walk anew. We walk in the truth by the power of God's holy spirit.

**Verse 6 – The LORD executes** (works) **righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed**, and that is all mankind.

**Verse 7 – He made known His ways to Moses**, and they were, of course, outlined by the Commandments, **His acts**, His power, **to the children of Israel**. We have to choose as to *whom* we will serve or to *what* we will serve. It has to be our choice.

And that's what a calling is about. God gives us the ability to choose. He presents His ways to us and then we have to make a choice. Will we choose to serve ourselves or will we choose to serve the Eternal God who loves us. To be a true servant of God on a spiritual level is the greatest achievement any human can or will achieve, because it is God *in us*! We have to choose to serve. So it is all done by the power of God's holy spirit, but it is about a choice that we must make. Will we choose to serve or will we choose to be served?

The world looks down on someone that is a servant. The word “servant” means “to be a slave.” Now, if you look at what society does, if you were to say you're a slave, well, there would be an uproar! There would be an uproar and the person that is (so-called) “being served” by the slave, well, they would be punished. But God says that we *are* to be slaves; we *are* to be servants of others, servants and slaves of God, servants and slaves of others. We are to serve others. Now, that's what a slave does.

Now, I know that it's “*forced service*” when we look at the word “slave.” They say it is “forced service.” But the Old Testament Biblical terms, the word “slave” was like “a role of employment.” Not everybody was *forced* to be a slave. Some were forced to be slaves because of their guilt, in the sense of a crime, and therefore, they had to become a slave of somebody for a period of time until the penalty was paid. If you were to be a slave it could be a voluntary thing, which is “to be a servant.” So a servant is

somebody that is serving somebody else that is doing somebody else's will. A servant does what he is told; he follows instructions. So today "to be a servant," well, someone would say, "That is a *lowly* role!" Well, that's what God says it is. It *is*. It requires someone to lower themselves, to put themselves down. That servant would follow instructions. They would serve. They would sacrifice, give up their time, give up their will and desire to put others before theirs. Now, isn't that wonderful!

Now, people of today say they have employment with a particular company, but what they are really saying is they are "servants" to that company, and in some ways they are "slaves" to that company because they have to do as they are told. That's the whole point of being a servant, is doing what is instructed.

We are truly blessed if we are called a servant or a slave of God. And I'll repeat that... We are truly blessed *if* we are called a servant or a slave of God. What a great honor it is! Because to be a servant of God means we are putting down our will and we are putting God's will first. To be a slave of God is to sacrifice ourselves to the benefit of others, to serve God and our fellow brethren. What a spiritual blessing it is to be a slave or a servant of God. Isn't that incredible if we understand it on a spiritual level! To be a slave of God is a *wonderful* thing! To be a servant of God is a *wonderful* thing; it's a great blessing.

If you'd hold your place there and turn to **Isaiah 49:3 – And He**, it's talking about God, **said to me**, and it's referring to Israel, **You, My servant**, and that is "slave" or "bondservant," **O Israel, in whom I will be glorified**. So on a spiritual level, today we could say that Israel is, of course, spiritual Israel, which is the Church of God, and we are pleased and honored if we are a servant, a bondservant of God.

**Verse 4 – Then I said**, this is Israel speaking, **I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain**. Now, that only happens to us, brethren, if we focus on the physical. If we are focused on the physical we have laboured in vain, have spent our strength on nothing. It is all just a vanity. **Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, and my work (or my reward) with my God**. Now, the reward is spiritual and it is *not* a waste of time. Because here it is, is Israel on a physical level saying, "Well, I think it's all waste of time! I've been working for nothing! I've got nothing to show for my life, for all my hard work!" Nevertheless, God's going to have the last word in it – yet what it's really saying is, "Well, no, on a spiritual level it's not a waste of time. We *haven't* labored for nothing. We are laboring, serving God now for a purpose, which is life everlasting." So to be a servant of God is a great honor.

Now, these next lot of scriptures point to Jesus Christ.

**Verse 5 – And now the Lord says, Whom formed**, and that is "shaped like a potter does," **Me from the womb – why? – to be His Servant**. This can also be speaking about Israel. It can be talking about the Church of God, but it also points to Christ. So you can look at this at three different angles or three different ways.

So it says here, "Now the Lord says, 'Whom He formed.'" Well, God formed Israel, physically. He reformed the Church, spiritual Israel, and He formed Christ, "Me in the womb to be His servant." So that is the purpose of why Israel existed. That is the purpose of why the Church of God exists. And that was the purpose of Christ, to be God's servant.

Now it refers back to Jacob, **To bring Jacob**, and we know it's on a spiritual level, can be the Church as well, **back to Him**, return by repentance, **so that Israel is gathered to Him, (For I [Christ] shall be glorified in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength)**, so *God* is our strength. God was the strength of Israel (physical), God is the strength of Jesus Christ, and God is the strength of spiritual Israel, the Church of God.

If we look at it, there is a "type" of the Church, which was assembled back from a scattering to form a body on Pentecost of 1998. The only way back to having true fellowship with God is a gift of repentance. And that's the only way that we can have true fellowship with God, is if we remain in a repentant state. When we repent we come back into the role of serving God. We become servants of God once again. Now, this is where the issue comes in our life that we don't always see. *If* we have a natural, carnal mind we cannot be servants of God. It's impossible! Because the natural carnal mind is selfish, and when we're selfish, we don't serve. But if we repent of that and through the power of God's holy spirit choose to *sacrifice* ourselves, we choose to become servants of God and of others, and therefore, when we do that we come back into *true* fellowship with God and with God's people.

So to be in fellowship with God is to be a servant of God. To be in fellowship with others (brethren) is to be servants of others.

**Verse 6 – Indeed He says, (God says), It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore and to preserve ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, and that's "to show the way," That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.** So this is God saying, "I will give you," and it can be Christ and it can be physical Israel, and it can be the Church of God, "as a light to the gentiles."

So Israel was meant to be (physical Israel), meant to be "a light to the gentiles," to show God's way of life to the gentiles so that they could see God *through* them. But of course, they didn't fulfill it.

Spiritual Israel today is the Church. "I will give you," spiritual Israel today, the Church of God, "as a light to the gentiles." We, by the way we live our lives, are to show (*reveal*) God. That's what it is.

And of course, the third one is Christ: "I will give You," Christ, "as a light to the gentiles," which He achieved, which He did. He showed the way to live, "that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth," talking about God's salvation, which is Christ.

The only way to salvation is by the way of being *in* Israel, in the Church, by having the power of the holy spirit *in* a person; Christ *in* us is the only way. So we can be a light to the gentiles by the way we live. But of course, it all is achieved through God the Father because it is God that does these works in us. It's God that did the works in spiritual Israel, and it's God that did the works in and through Jesus Christ.

**Verse 7 – Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, and of course, this points to Christ now, To Him (Christ) whom man despises, to Him whom the nations abhor, to the Servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, because of the LORD who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You,** has Christ. So if you look back at that, it's Christ that is being referred to because, "The Lord God who is faithful, the Holy One," God, "of Israel, and He (God) has chosen You (Jesus Christ) to be our servant."

If you'd like to turn to 2 Timothy 2 it actually covers what is expected of a "slave" or a "servant" of God. And this is Paul writing to Timothy about being an elder in God's Church. **2 Timothy 2:22 – Flee also youthful lusts**, and these are "desires or cravings" that come into the mind, **but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the LORD out of a pure heart.** So we are to *follow* these ways which are God's ways. And this is what Paul was instructing Timothy because he was to be a light to those around him. That was the point of being in the ministry, was to reflect God's mind, God's ways, and therefore, he was to pursue or to follow after righteousness, right conduct, right attitudes. "Faith, love" – he was to have concern, to be a servant (because that's what a minister is, is a servant) – and "peace with those who call on the LORD out of a pure heart." So how do we have peace, brethren? Well, it's only able to be achieved through unity. That is the only way peace can be achieved, is through unity, and therefore, unity of doctrine is the most important thing. If we don't have unity of doctrine we cannot have peace.

**Verse 23 – But avoid**, and that is "reject or refuse," **foolish and ignorant disputes.** Now, these "foolish and ignorant disputes" can happen within the Church because it's about *questioning*, people that raise these "spiritual questions" in a *questioning* way, not for the purpose of understanding, but *challenging* those "that speak without spiritual knowledge and understanding," **knowing that they generate strife.** They will cause contention or *fighting*. Paul was instructing Timothy here to avoid these "vain disputes" really, because they *are* vain. They're "foolish and *ignorant* disputes" because they're questions that are based on contention.

Now, people can ask questions for the sake of *understanding*, but they're not done in an unteachable way. They're done in a humble way; therefore, the person can absorb what is being said to them and they will take it on board because they're asking in the right attitude. Now, someone else can ask a question in a wrong attitude because it's challenging or it's in the sense of fighting or in the sense of contention, which is going to generate strife, because they're not in a state of humility and they're in a state of pride. Therefore, why? What's the point of answering them? They're already got the answer. They've already worked out in their mind what they're going to hear, and therefore, there is no point.

So Paul's instructing Timothy here to avoid these foolish disputes. Don't get into it. It's a waste of time. It's all worthless. Because what's the outcome? It'll just generate an *argument* because the hearer is not going to listen to what you've got to say anyway, so what's the point of answering. So what is the point of answering somebody who's asking a question in the sense of pride? They're not willing to understand on a humble level. They want to understand on a proud-filled basis; therefore, they're not going to hear you anyway so what's the point.

**Verse 24 – And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.** There is a time to stand and correct someone that is turning against the truth. There *is* a time to say to someone that you don't agree with what they're saying. There *is* a time to say to someone that what they are saying is not correct and that you are not interested in what they have to say. If we disagree with them because they don't agree with sound doctrine, we are doing the right thing. It's about standing. But we're not to get into a dispute or contention with them; it's a pointless exercise. It's simply a matter of standing and saying, "I don't agree with what you have said or the statement you have made. I just disagree with it." This is how we prove we are servants of God. What will we do when we hear someone that is trying to bring up "foolish speaking" or come into contention to generate strife? Well, what will a servant of God do? Well, a servant of God will stand *for* God...they

will stand for God. They will not take the words of someone that is being foolish and let it run and let it dwell. They will actually *stand* for God.

Will we stand and defend God's government? His servants? The brethren? Any of those areas? Will we stand, brethren? Well, that's the point. Paul was instructing Timothy that he was not to get into disputes with these people that are raising these stupid questions and wanting to be contentious. There is no point because we're to handle them in humility. And the way we handle them in humility is to be straight to the point, to stand for God, to be a servant of God, to demonstrate that we *are* servants of God.

**Verse 26 – and *that they may come to their senses***, on a spiritual level. If they come to their senses, they're going to be repentant and they're going to return to the truth, ***and escape the snare of the devil***, because that's what they've fallen into, the false accuser, the slanderer, the Devil, Satan. They've fallen into this *trap*. And this trap is one of not being a servant any longer, but desiring to be contentious with God's Church! That's what they're doing! So when they're starting to be contentious and asking questions for the sake of an *argument*, we have to be very careful how we handle it that we don't also fall into this trap. Because that's what it can be. It can turn into a trap ***...having been taken captive by him to do his will***. Isn't that incredible! Because when we go down that path of having the wrong attitude, of wanting to *argue* and to be contentious, we've already fallen into the trap. We've fallen into the trap because we have the wrong attitude. Then we become servants of *sin*. When do we serve Satan's ways? When are we servants of Satan? ...slaves to his way? When we fall into this trap of sin. Either we serve God or we serve *sin*. We either serve God or we serve *Satan*. We either serve God or serve Satan. We either serve God in righteousness and truth, in humility, or we serve Satan in sin and pride.

Now we're going to go into a parable, as it points to Christ and those called by God to a role of service, because that's what we've been called to. It is all about what we do in the way we serve others. Our way of serving others has been revealed by the way we think towards others and the way we treat others. Do we think mercy, forgiveness, and no ill will? And that's what's going to require to be a servant of someone else. We're going to have to be merciful, we're going to have to be forgiving, and we're not to think any ill will.

**Matthew 25:14-35** – And being a parable, of course, it produces various ways to look at a particular topic and it covers many examples of spiritual principles that can be used and applied. Because it is a parable (it is not exact), but it gives an outline of a spiritual intent. ***For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them***. This is like a calling, where God the Father calls us to a role of a servant and we are delivered goods, and they are, of course, are spiritual attributes or the truth or the mind of God living and dwelling in us. These are things that we carry in our thinking by the power of God's holy spirit.

**Verse 15 – And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one**. So we can look at that on a physical level where we can see the man standing in front of his servants here and handing over talents (which is money, a level of money) to each person. Well, we look at that on a spiritual level, that we all have spiritual gifts and they all vary and some are given more and some are given less, and it all is about what we're going to do with what we're given ***...to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey***. Now, this is referring, of course, to somebody that is now handing out these things and they are *his* servants and he's gone off on a journey to another location.

**Verse 16 – Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them.** Now, “traded” is “the way we serve others” on a spiritual level. So here on a physical level, it's somebody who's got the five talents, these five lots of money, and goes out and trades with them (and by trading, it can be buying and selling to make a profit), so that he can increase the number of talents or the increase of the money that he has. Well we, brethren, can “trade” as well. We have been given spiritual attributes to trade with, and “to trade” means “to use them.” They have to be given out to others as a benefit to others. And God says that if we do that, if we live love out to others, God will continue to give us more, because it is God that is going to provide for us. The way we trade is the way we “see” others and it's the way we “serve” others. Because if we see others as less than us we're not going to serve them because we're motivated by pride, but if we “trade,” the way we serve others, we view others in a right perspective, as God's servants, we will serve them in humility.

And this particular servant here **made another five talents.** Now, with the holy spirit leading a person they choose to yield to God's spirit and sacrifice themselves, sacrifice the selfishness *in* them. Now, that is the “trading,” brethren. That is *our* “trading.” We have to sacrifice ourselves. And that's when we “trade” because when we sacrifice ourselves we are giving out our “talent,” which is God's holy spirit to the *benefit of others*. Because God will live in us, but we have to choose, we have to choose to put ourselves down and to put ourselves out, to reduce our selfishness so that God can live out to the benefit of others. It's an exciting experience that we are living.

**Verse 17 – And likewise he who had received two gained two more.** So the one who had two went out and traded his two lots of money and he gained two more.

**Verse 18 – But he who had received one went and dug it in the ground and hid his lord's money.** So, now this is referring to this particular person. He gets his one lot of money, his one talent, and he says, “Well, I'm just going to hang on to it,” so he goes and buries it and he does nothing with it. It's *dormant* and it does nothing. But he in himself feels he's done the right thing. So this is *no effort* in trading, and on a spiritual level, there is *no effort* in sacrificing for others. There is no overcoming the selfish desires because it's pleasing the self first. So it's doing his own will. So we, brethren, need to be on guard here that we are not just fulfilling our selfish desires to please the self first, by burying our talent, because God can provide us a gift of the spirit, but whether or not we choose to allow God to live out to the benefit of others in our life, it requires a choice from us.

**Verse 19 – After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.** And it's important to remember that they are *servants*. Their *role* is one of being a *servant*, and a servant is somebody that serves, that gives, that produces to the benefit of the master, otherwise, we are not servants.

**Verse 20 – So he who had received five talents came and brought,** and we can look at this on a spiritual level, that there was spiritual effort made by making the right choices, **he brought five other talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I gained five more talents besides them.** So he's increased and now there are ten talents to be given back to his master because he was a faithful servant.

**Verse 21 – His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.** Now, we can look at this on a spiritual level. God is saying here that the person was given five spiritual talents, this ability. God

was going to do work *through* him to a level and the person had to make spiritual effort in *choosing* to allow God to do it. And in allowing that the person grew in Godly character and then at some point in time God will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," because that's what we have to be, *faithful servants* with what we've been given. Whether that is how much truth we've been given, how much spiritual understanding we have been given – all of these things have to be guarded and traded, and that is to the *benefit* of others. "You who were faithful over a few things," so when you look at it on a spiritual level, "a few things," during Philadelphia, they were given "a few things," a few truths. They weren't given anywhere near what God has given us at this time. We have much, really, we have much. But what it is in the scheme of everything, in the scheme of how great God is and looking back and looking forward in time, it's only a few things that we've been given because we have been given a lot in one way, but in another way it's very little...it's very little compared to what God *is* and what we're going to learn and what God is going to give us in the future.

So we are faithful over what we have. So this is pointing to what God has given us. We are to be *faithful* in it, *faithful servants*. Now, if we're *unfaithful*, we're not a servant. If we're *unfaithful*, we are *not* a servant of God! Because to be a servant of God is to be faithful.

"I will make you ruler over many things." Well, this is a promise of God on a spiritual level. "Enter into the joy of the Lord," enter into the spirit realm of and as Elohim! Isn't this incredible! So this is pointing to spiritual aspects of what *we* have to do, brethren, as servants.

So this is all about being a faithful servant of God. It is about always remaining *under* authority. To be a faithful servant is to love God and the brethren. To be a faithful servant is to be trustworthy – so we can be trusted – obedient to our master, and serve Him and His will and purpose. Now, there is much said in all of that. So we are to "remain under authority," because that's what a servant would do. If you had a servant and you gave them an instruction, they would remain *under* the authority and would fulfill that role of *service*. Now, if they don't, they're going to lift themselves up. They're not going to remain *under* your authority. So they're going to be in rebellion against you. Therefore, they're not faithful servants.

So we, brethren, are to be faithful servants of God. We're to put God first. And by being faithful servants we are to *obey His voice*. We are to follow the instructions given to us by God.

**Verse 22 – He also had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.** So if we look at that on a spiritual level it's what God does in a person's life because everybody's role is different. As we have looked back on previous sermons we've seen that everybody's role is different in the Body. We all have different roles to fulfill and those roles are based on where *God* places us *in* the Body. What role we fulfill is based on what God is about to achieve in His Church. So we're not all the *same* and we can't be. So some *are* given five talents, but they have a greater accountability to use and trade those five talents that God is going to allow them to use. Another person is given two talents; therefore, they're only expected to trade the two. They're not expected to trade five because they were never given five, so they don't have the depth of spiritual understanding or knowledge. And remembering that it is God that does the works in an individual's life and it's up to us to *choose* to allow God to live in our life; therefore, we're all going to be in the Body for a different role and different purpose according to *God's* will and purpose, what He is going to achieve *in* an individual's life.

Now, one of the greatest problems within a human being is that we look at others and measure them against *ourselves*, and we might think that we've got two talents and we look out and think others don't have any, or we might think we've even got five, or we might think we've even got ten, and when we have those level of talents and we think we have them – which is very dangerous – we tend to look down on others. And if we look down on others, guess what? There is no way we're going to serve them because we've lifted ourselves up in pride and God can't work with pride.

So we need to be very careful. And the most important thing, of course, is to look at ourselves and worry about ourselves. Look at our own talents – *are* we allowing God to live in our life? Are we? And that's what the point is! It doesn't matter how many talents God has given us, it's about what we *do* with the talents that we have been given. In other words, what do we do with what we know? What do we do with what thoughts come into our minds? It's about what *we* do on an individual level. We should worry about ourselves and not about others. That's why we should never look out at others to judge or condemn. There is no point. Why? Because we should be looking in and *judging ourselves*... we should be looking in and judging ourselves.

**Verse 23 – His lord said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.**

**Verse 24 – Then he who had received one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered.** Now, this is virtually a person who has made a *judgement* against God. Because anybody, any servant, any true servant that came up and said, "Well, I know you as my master, that you are a *hard* man and that you reap where you have *not* sown..." So this is a terrible judgement that someone has done. So you can see already that there is a wrong attitude involved here because it's a judgemental *condemning* attitude. It's not a judgement of righteousness based on God's word but a condemning attitude of saying, "Well, I *knew* you're a hard man." So it's a lot of self-righteousness involved in here.

**Verse 25 – And I was afraid and went and hid my talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.** In other words, he's going to give back exactly what he was given. In other words, no growth. Now, if we look at that on a spiritual level, we can hide our talent in the ground, brethren. Whatever attribute on a spiritual level that God has given us, with regards to knowledge or understanding or works of God's spirit coming into our life, we can't just stop the flow and not grow. God requires growth! So God provides His spirit for the purpose of what we will do in the way of what choice we will make. Will we allow God to live out to the benefit of others? If we hide it in the ground there is no growth, and if there is no growth, the reality is we're losing value. So we can't hide our talent, brethren, which is God's spirit. God's spirit is our talent. *God's spirit IS* our talent. It's what we've been given – God's spirit. Now, it's a matter of whether we're going to use it, whether we're going to serve others. We're going to serve God or not.

So we can see from this aspect he has the wrong attitude and is focused on himself and has *not* sacrificed for others. He hasn't traded. He did what was carnal in his mind. He justified *why* he did what he did. So these are all aspects of sin. He did what the carnal mind does – justifies! It's justified *why* he did it, "I hid it in the ground *because*..." So he made a reason; he justified himself. He made excuses as to why. Now, these are things that we can do, brethren, on a spiritual level as well. "I did not do as I was told *because*..." In other words, that's an excuse. So we, brethren, have to be very careful that we don't allow our natural, carnal mind to take control of ourselves, to justify why we haven't grown spiritually.

We can make excuses as to *why* we have done certain things. To make an excuse is justification and justification is sin. We have *no* excuse. We have been called as servants of God. We *know* we are servants of God. We *know* we have to sacrifice for God. We have to sacrifice ourselves for God. We have to sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of others. We know it! So what excuse can we make? What excuse can we make? We can make *no excuse*! We can't *justify* why we haven't grown spiritually. We can't justify why we're not in unity, why we don't agree with God! We can't justify! We can't make excuses! Because we all know our role of service. Why were we called? To be a servant of God. That's why we were called. It's our purpose in life, is to serve, and the only way we can serve is to *sacrifice* ourselves to the benefit of others.

Now, if we're not, if we're not sacrificing ourselves to the benefit of others, we're not loving, we're not using the talent that God has given us to us, therefore, we've buried it in the ground and there will be no growth, we have no value. We have not increased our value. Now, our value is only valued based on God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. Our works are based on God's spirit living and dwelling in us and that we *choose* to put ourselves down so that others benefit.

God now reveals the truth of why the servant did not do what was asked of him. No matter what the servant says in the way of justification, this is the answer. **Verse 26 – But his lord answered and said to him, You wicked and lazy servant, you knew I reap where I have not sown and gathered where I have not scattered seed.** Here it is. He's being now told what the real purpose is - serving takes effort...serving takes effort. Serving takes *work*. And of course, he's being told here, that he is a *lazy* servant. Now, to be lazy on a spiritual level means we are not sacrificing the selfishness in us. We're just living the selfishness. We're not actually sacrificing it. We're not even aware of it. We're not even trying to discipline it. We're doing *nothing* about it. It's called being asleep. That's what it really is. The moment we become a lazy servant and we're not sacrificing ourselves, we are in the process of either going to sleep or are already asleep because we're no longer disciplining the thoughts.

God requires His servants to grow spiritually by the choices they make and that His servants don't make weak, selfish excuses. So that's our problem, brethren, that we need to be careful. Let's not come up with weak, selfish excuses as to *why* we haven't served God or *why* we haven't served the brethren. Now, if we're not serving God and we're not serving the brethren we are in sin and we are being wicked. So when Christ was using this parable here and said, "You wicked," well, when we're wicked, what? We're sinners. We're selfish, "and lazy," which means we're putting no effort. There is no attempt to even fight the fight – talking about it on a spiritual level.

So this is the reason why this person with the one talent did nothing because he was actually wicked and he became lazy. He *was* lazy. He did nothing about striving to serve God or striving to serve his fellow brother.

**Verse 27 – So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers,** because why? It would have earned some interest at least. It would have *grown*, something would have happened. He would have done something. He wouldn't have been considered a *lazy servant* because at least he was trying to do something. Even if the interest was low it was something. It was *some* level of growth **...and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.** So some growth of some type. Some sacrificing for the benefit of others on a spiritual level.

So let's look at that, brethren, on a spiritual level. If we only have a number of talents, no matter how many it is, we need to be doing something with those talents, those benefits that we have. Now, we have talents on a physical level, but we also have talents on a spiritual level to trade because it is about what we do to benefit others, that sacrificing, which is to be a servant.

**Verse 28 – Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.** Now, why would that happen? Because he will use it as instructed. Because he's a faithful servant. So if somebody was a boss and you gave work out to people and everybody did their work, except one who did nothing, what would you do? Well, the first thing you would do is you'd remove them from your employment. You would remove the servant and you'd take his work, what he had been given to do, and you'd give it to somebody else. You'd give them money that you'd given them, you'd give it to someone else. And who would you give it to? You'd give it to the one who had the ten or the five or the seven – doesn't matter how many – because you know they're going to trade with them. You know they're going to *increase* it. And what is God? God is the greatest servant, so He wants to be able to live in, dwell in people for the purpose of *benefitting others...to benefit others*. So you would take this talent, this spiritual gift, the holy spirit, and give *more* abilities to somebody that is going to *use it*, who's going to *choose* to allow God to live and dwell in them out to the benefit of others. Isn't that a beautiful picture when we understand it, what it's really all about? It's about what God is doing *in us*, whether we're faithful servants or not.

So if we have talents, of whatever degree they are, with regards to God's spirit in us (and God is the one who gives us those spiritual talents), and they're all given to us – why? Not for selfish reasons, not that we can take and say, "Well, I'm better than somebody else," or "I have more than somebody else." No! It's irrelevant really! It's about what we do with it! So whether we have one spiritual talent that God has granted (because it's God that grants the talent), whether we have one or whether we have ten or whether we have fifty, it doesn't matter. It's what we *do with the talent*! How much God's spirit comes into our life. It's about what we do, what we *choose to do* with it, how much we're willing to *sacrifice ourselves*. And that's what it's all about.

To be a servant of God is to *sacrifice ourselves*. And that's what we've been called to, to sacrifice ourselves to the benefit of others, put ourselves out to *do* good works, allow God to do good works in and out to the benefit of others.

**Verse 29 – For to everyone who has, more will be given – Why? Why is that? Well, because God can then increase to the benefit of others. God loves His creation. God *wants* and *desires* to give to others!** And how does He do it? Through individuals, through members of the Body of Christ. So our role *is* to be a *faithful servant*, a *willing servant* so God can live in us out to the benefit of others – and that's done by our *choice*.

**Verse 29 again, For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance.** In other words, God will do more works *in us* because God desires to benefit others **...but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.** Because we're unfaithful.

Verse 30 – What's the result of the unfaithful servant? What is it about someone who's not willing to sacrifice, who chooses *not* to use the talent, to use God's spirit in their life? **Verse 30 – And cast the unprofitable servant,** because they're unprofitable, they're of no value **...into outer darkness.** Well, that is, of course, to be cast into outer darkness is a death, a second death. **There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Now we'll look at another parable that talks about this aspect of what we should do with regards to being a true servant of God. So we're seeing the first one is we need to be *faithful* servants. And to be faithful is to allow God to live and dwell in us and to live and dwell out to the benefit of others by a *choice* that comes into our minds that we need to do something – we have a choice now. Will we benefit others or won't we? Will we sacrifice ourselves? Will we put ourselves out? Will we deny ourselves or won't we? And that's what that parable is referring to. We have to trade, brethren. We have to trade by a choice to trade. We're not to be lazy and unprofitable.

There is another parable in Matthew 18 and this is about a parable of being merciful and forgiving. If you'd like to be turning to Matthew 18:21. God's servants are those that practice the principle of mercy and forgiveness. The only way to have mercy is to have humility. A servant is someone that is devoted to another, to disregard his own interests. Now, this is an important key (if you look at it on a physical level), but on a spiritual level a servant is someone that is devoted to another, to disregard their own interests. They are willing to serve, to see others receive ahead of themselves. They are willing to sacrifice.

**Matthew 18:21 – Then Peter came to Him (Christ) and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Now, Peter would have thought here that he was being pretty generous about "until seven times." Now that's a fair bit to be forgiving somebody something.**

Humans think by nature that seven would be well over the amount that they should forgive anybody. That's just human nature. Forgiving somebody once is pretty good in human thinking, let alone seven times. Wow, seven times, that's very generous of a human being to do that.

**Verse 22 – Jesus said to him, I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.** Four hundred and ninety times! In other words, *always!* Always! We are to always be forgiving. Now, the natural, carnal mind, this cannot be comprehended...cannot be comprehended, really. To be able to forgive someone *always*, no matter what, just cannot be understood by the natural, carnal mind. But with a spiritual mind we understand that we have to be always forgiving because that is God's nature, and therefore, to be always forgiving requires God's holy spirit to live and dwell in us. Because we can't be forgiving if we don't have God's spirit! It's absolutely *impossible*... absolutely impossible to be *always* forgiving if we don't have God's spirit.

But Christ is revealing here a spiritual principle about the attitude that we must choose, that we must *choose to be forgiving*, and we can only choose to be forgiving by the power of God's holy spirit, by trading one of the talents that we have, which is God's holy spirit, which is, one of them is, mercy, to be forgiving.

**Verse 23 – Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.**

**Verse 24 – And when he had begun to settle the accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.** So he owed him a lot of money.

**Verse 25 – But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that the payment be made.** So he had this debt that needed to be

paid. Now, we know from Old Testament scripture that the way that this happened was that somebody was an employee (because it's a servant, someone who worked for somebody) and he owed a lot of money. Well, the only way that the debt could be paid, if it was called upon to be paid, was that the person turned around and said, "Well, I don't have any money. I can't pay you." Well, what the master would do, the person who was the employer, would turn around to the employee and say, "Well, you owe me this money. I'm going to now give you to somebody else where you're going to work. And when I sell you to this other person they will then be able to pay me. So I'm going to sell you to somebody else so you'll be their servant, you'll be their slave, and you will work for them. And you have a value, for how much you can generate, how much your wife and your children can generate. And that's the value you have; therefore, I'm now going to sell you to somebody else, and therefore, with that money I will then say your debt is paid." And that was the way that a debt could be paid. The debt had to be paid.

Now, we look at this on a spiritual level. Brethren, we work for a master, and we either work for one or the other. We work for ourselves (our selfishness) or we work for God. We're either a slave to sin or a slave to God. Now, we have a debt. Because we are slaves to sin by nature, there is a debt to be paid. Now, that debt has been paid already for us. Our sin is a debt that has to be paid for. Sin earns death. Now we, of course, know and understand on a spiritual level that Christ has purchased us. He has *paid our debt for us!* Isn't that incredible? Isn't that *amazing* to understand? That we as servants of God are servants to sin as well, because that's what we do when we're carnal, and now we've been called out of that, but we haven't been sold, we've been *purchased* – that God the Father purchased us through the death of His only begotten Son. Now we have been *purchased* to be *servants* of God. What a beautiful picture that is!

**Verse 26 – The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.** So here he is saying, "Well, I'm going to pay it all back to you! Don't sell me! Be patient with me! Don't sell my wife and children. Don't sell me over to this other master and gain the money that I owe you. Just be patient with me. I will make sure that I pay it all back to you, just give me some time." In other words, "Show me some mercy."

**Verse 27 – Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.** So here he is, he's saying, "Well, I'm going to show you mercy. I'm going to release you from the debt that you owe me. I'm going to have this compassion; I'm going to be forgiving and forgive you the debt. You don't even have to pay it back to me. It's written off. You're *free!* You don't have to pay it back!" Isn't that incredible mercy that has been shown?!

We have earned the death penalty on a spiritual level and God is willing to forgive us, release us from the debt. How? Through Jesus Christ. It's an incredible picture.

**But that servant,** the one that had just been released from this debt from his master, **went out and found one of his fellow servants,** and we can say that that is one of the brethren, **who owed him a hundred denarii,** so this is only a small amount of money, **and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what you owe!** So this is not the attitude of someone that has just been forgiven, and now they've got this wrong attitude towards a small debt. Well this is, of course, is pointing to something on a spiritual level. We have been given forgiveness, release from *our debt*. We've been released from our debt because of God's mercy to us through Jesus Christ. Now, what we could do, brethren, is that we can then turn on our fellow brethren and not be forgiving...not be forgiving. God is forgiving. He has forgiven us *our debt*: "the wages of sin is death." And here we are, we can then choose

to have an attitude of being unforgiving. Even though we have been forgiven, we can have an attitude of not forgiving others. And that's what this parable is about.

**Verse 29 – So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay you all. And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he would pay the debt.** So this is a totally unforgiving attitude. Considering that he had been forgiven his *large* debt, now there is this small, very small debt and he's not going to be forgiving. He's going to hold this person to the debt. He's going to hold him to pay it back.

**Verse 31 – So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity (or mercy) on you?** If you look at that this is all about living mercy to others. So we have been shown mercy by God. God has shown us mercy. Well, we would be a wicked servant if we don't adapt the same attitude of forgiveness, forgiving other people's debts.

Now, we need to be very careful, brethren. We should make sure that we live mercy to others. We are required as servants of God to always be forgiving and to live mercy to *all* always...*always*. And that's the point. We can hold *nothing* against *anybody*. It's not our role. We are servants of God and if we take on the mind of God and understand what God has done for us in the fact that He has been all merciful to us, *we* have to be all merciful to *everybody*... to everybody. And this is talking about on a spiritual level, of course. We understand that we have no right to hold anything against anybody – we have no right – and that we *can* live mercy to others.

So we can demonstrate this and live it in our life, brethren, by the way we treat others...the way we treat the other brethren, that we can always be forgiving no matter what is said or what is done to us, or what is even perceived to be done to us – it doesn't matter – we can always be forgiving because we have God's spirit and we understand our true value. We understand what God has done for us. He has forgiven us all our debts – been forgiven at baptism and washed clean, but also when we come to God in a state of repentance in prayer. We are forgiven. God is all merciful and He is always going to forgive us if we always are repenting in sincerity and truth.

**Verse 35 – So My (Jesus Christ's) heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, so this is from this inner thinking (and it's talking about something on a spiritual level), does not forgive his brother his trespass (or his offence).** So we, brethren, have to be forgiving.

The point is as God's servants, to receive forgiveness from God, we must ourselves be forgiving to others. And I'll repeat that because this is the foundation of this particular parable. The point is as God's servants, to receive forgiveness *from* God, we must ourselves be forgiving to others. And that is what our life is about.

Going back to Psalm 103:8. A servant is someone that is devoted to another, to the disregard of his own interests. And that's a point to do. It's about sacrificing and putting ourselves out – it's not about our will – and about putting ourselves out to the benefit of others.

**Psalm 103:8 – The LORD is merciful and gracious**, and that is “shows favor,” **slow to anger, and abounding in mercy**, in kindness. God knows the way we are. He knows our physical state. He sees our *potential*, and that's the point – He sees our potential, which is spiritual in nature.

**Verse 9 – He (God) will not always plead, nor will He keep His pleading forever.** So God desires that we listen. That's what He desires. He desires that we listen.

**Verse 10 – He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.** So we deserve the death penalty because we are living sin most of our life until we're called, until we're called out of it so that we no longer choose to sin. We fight sin by our choices. So we haven't been punished according to our sins.

Why is God doing this? What's His plan? **Verse 11 – For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.** Now, that is God's plan. We are to come into being servants of God. To fear God is to serve God. To fear God is to serve Him *with obedience*. And that's God's plan. We've been called out of this world to come into the role of being a servant of God. To serve Him is to obey Him.

**As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.** And that's His plan, to call us into this relationship, to forgive us, and then to have the process of being able to be forgiven on an ongoing basis based on *our forgiveness*. Because if we will not forgive somebody else a trespass or a transgression or something against us, God *cannot* forgive us *our* sin, our transgressions.

Now, we know we're forgiven by Passover because God is all merciful and God sacrificed for us by allowing Jesus Christ to exist for the purpose of covering our sin. Now, as we looked at that past parable we have to be careful because if we are not in a state of forgiving others, if we're holding grudges, we will *not* be forgiven. We can go before God and ask God to forgive us – He *cannot* forgive us! Why? Because we're not forgiving. Because it's about God's spirit living and dwelling *in* us. If we're not forgiving what have we got? Pride! We've got pride! We are esteeming ourselves *above* – we're not *under* God at all. So to be forgiven of our sin, brethren, we have to be forgiving. We have to understand on a spiritual level God's plan and purpose for *all* mankind. And we have *no right* to hold anything against another person because they are all (and they will be in time) God's servants. So we're not to hold any grudges, and if we're not forgiving, we cannot be forgiven.

**Verse 13 – As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities**, and this is really a wrong word, it's really “have mercy or compassion on” **those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for a man, his days like the grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.** So we're temporary, brethren, we are just temporary. We come and go. We're just a process of time. We come and go. We're just passing through. **For the wind passes over the grass and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.** So it's only temporary.

**Verse 17 – But the mercy of the LORD**, this mercy and forgiveness, **is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children.** So this is an ongoing process. God says, "I do not change." God does not change. God is all merciful. His desire, His being is one of being merciful. God is forgiving. There are parameters to forgiveness, which we've covered briefly – which of course is about us. We have to be forgiving to be forgiven.

**Verse 18 – To such as keep His covenant,** His agreement, His instructions, **to those who remember His commandments to do them.** And this is about obedience in the spirit. It's a matter of the spirit. To be obedient to God is a spiritual matter. It's not a physical one. It's spiritual in nature.

**Verse 19 – The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all.**

Now, the contrast between angels and men is outlined now. **Verse 20 – Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength,** that's called, "mighty ones," **who do His will/His word, heeding the voice of His word.** So they were created to *serve*. They were created *servants*. Well we, brethren, are created *to be* servants. So we weren't created *as* servants like the angels were – they were created that way as servants, created to serve. Well, we are created with the *potential* of being a servant.

**Verse 21 – Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,** talking about the angels, **you ministers of His who do His pleasure.** Well, they are servants. They were created that way. **Bless the LORD, all His works,** all His creation should glorify God. **In all places of His domain,** which is everywhere. **Bless the LORD, O my soul!** We have by nature, physical carnal mind, a *desire* to be served, to be looked at or up to, to be viewed by others as important. We desire to *be served* by others not to serve. That's not the natural, carnal mind because the natural, carnal mind, if it says it's a servant of somebody, it views itself as "less than," and yet God says that we have been created to be servants.

Pride is our greatest enemy while we are *in* the flesh. Pride will cause us not to desire to serve. With pride we cannot serve on a spiritual level, but to be true servants of God requires God's holy spirit. So with pride we cannot serve on a spiritual level or be true servants of God.

Matthew 20, if you'd like to turn to Matthew 20:20. This is about the natural carnal mind and it shows the way that it thinks, about what it considers to be important, how it is to be important. **Matthew 20:20 – Then the mother of Zebedee's sons,** and that is the mother of James and John, **came to Him,** came to Christ, **with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.**

**Verse 21 – And He (Christ) said to her, What do you wish?** "What do you wish" is a bad translation. It really should be, "What do you will?" "What would you have?" Or "What do you desire?" Because the word "wish" is really not there. **She said to Him, Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.** "In the Millennium," is what she's saying. And you'll notice she says, "Let *my* sons..." "Let *my* two sons..." because this is a personal question from her and she's not looking at it from the view of anybody else but "*my* sons," not somebody else's sons, but "*my* two sons." We should note the words, "my sons," reveals a selfish request as a mother. A mother or father loves on a human level their own flesh and blood, but not others. Human love *is* selfish. Now this is a spiritual matter and it's difficult for the natural, carnal mind to even begin to comprehend it and it can't. But on a spiritual level we understand that what we think is ours or what is from our flesh and blood, we will place that first before others because that's natural. "To sit" is "to be above or have authority over." So what she's asking for is to raise her sons up in authority, to be "greater than," not to be servants but to be "greater than." She thinks that sitting next to Christ in authority means you're going to be *over* them, you're going to tell others what to do.

She is viewing this from a natural, carnal mind's view. To be over is to have power over, so "to be served" and viewed as important. That's what she's asking. She wants her two sons to be served by others and to be seen as important.

Now, Christ corrects her, **verse 22 – But Jesus answered and said, You do not know what you ask.** Because it's on a spiritual level. "You have no idea what you're asking about!" Christ now goes on and asks the question, **Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized** (or immersed) **with the baptism that I am baptized with?** Which is going to be suffering and death. And **They said to Him, We are able.** Now, they said that not understanding what Christ was really saying. They were looking at it on a physical level and Christ, of course, is looking at it on a physical *and* a spiritual level, the suffering that's going to have to take place while He was in the flesh.

**Verse 23 – So He said to them, You will indeed drink My cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;** "You are going to suffer and die," is what He was saying **...but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is,** and that is **prepared or made ready by My Father.** So the authority that is given on a spiritual level has to come from God the Father. It is God the Father that establishes what will take place as far as on a spiritual level and a physical level.

God has a plan and has prepared roles and positions for service in *His* government. A human cannot choose a position they desire. We just can't turn around and say, "I want to be the head" or "I want to be the eye," or "I want to be the ear." It's not possible. It's *God's* government. It's *God's* Church. It's *God's* Kingdom... it's God's Kingdom, and therefore, God has already prepared roles and positions *of service in His* government. And that's what it's about. Now, they were requesting something, or the mother was requesting on behalf of the boys (and they would probably be in on it) – they were requesting something, thinking it was about power and authority and being served, but it's not. It's about humility and service.

And that's what entering Elohim is about. It's about humility and service. And our role in this life is to demonstrate our humility *by our service.* God allocates and has allocated all positions of service in His Kingdom and in His Church. If we look at the spirit realm, God set all angelic realm to be in order. They were allocated their positions of service. So the angelic realm is in order, it is structured, and it was allocated and put in a structure and it was all based on roles of service. Now, they all didn't have the same level of service. They were allocated it by God the Father. Well, God's Kingdom is exactly the same. And we can see that from the parables we've read, it is all about *roles of service* and it is God that allocates it.

God the Father is the one that places us into the Church, *into the Kingdom,* based on His will and purpose. We have been called to service now and in the future. That is actually what is going to take place.

**Verse 24 – And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased, they were angry, with the two brothers.**

**Verse 25 – But Jesus called them to and said** (it's "to Himself" there, but it's just the word "himself" has been added): **"You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them;** now, this is 'exercise dominion'. Because the rulers of the gentiles required people to *serve them,* that's what they required, **and those who are great exercise authority over them.** They control them. They have this dominion and control over them and they desire people to serve them. They have servants and they expect them to serve them.

**Verse 26 – Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.** Isn't that amazing? Cause it's a spiritual matter!

**Verse 27 – And whoever desires to be first,** and that is “chief” **among you**, so you want to be great, you want to sit on the right hand and the left hand... **let him be your slave**— Now, this is incredible because it's talking about something on a spiritual level. Now, for people to understand that on a physical level, saying, "What do you mean I've got to become a slave?" Because slave is looked down on. It's something that is bad or evil in the eyes of a human. If someone is a slave they're “less than.” But God is saying, "Well, if you want to be great, if you want to be chief, if you want to be first, **let him be your servant!** So we have to become servants! We have to become slaves of God, servants of mankind, servants of the brethren.

**Verse 28 – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.** Life in the Body of Christ is about developing a sacrificing love which is empowered by God's holy spirit, just as it was in Christ's life.

Well, the main point of this sermon, brethren, is to be a servant of God is to obey God in *all* things in spirit and truth. We have to *choose* to serve God. We have to *choose* to serve the brethren. We have to *choose* to become a slave of God and to become a slave of the brethren...which is to be a servant. □