

WEEK 10

CALL TO SERVICE

MEANING OF SERVICE

Service can be defined as the work done for a person, group of people, God, organization, or a community.

Each of us does one thing or the other that another person will benefit from. Any service that does not benefit another human being is not good. For example, an armed robber who steals the property of another person and kills or wounds the person does not render any service. An example of good service is teaching. Our teacher teaches us so that we can acquire knowledge. We come to school to receive knowledge which we will later use to benefit our society as we become doctors, journalists, lawyers, accountants, engineers, etc. In this way, we are also rendering our service to the community. But if as a student we refuse to go to school, we will lack knowledge that can make us useful to ourselves and our society at large.

Life in God's service (1 Peter 2: 18-25)

Life in God's service refers to the type of behavior we should demonstrate in rendering our service. Life in God's service calls for responsiveness, diligence, responsibility, honesty, and faithfulness. The Holy Bible encourages us that as servants we should be subject to our masters with all fear. We should not only be good and gentle but also be forthright. We should endure grief if we suffer wrongfully. This requires that we should serve both man and God faithfully, diligently, and with all our hearts.

Blessings of Service

1. When we serve faithfully, we will receive appreciation from people.
 2. God will give us a good reward.
 3. We will derive joy from any good service we render.
 4. People will emulate our good service and because of this, we become a role model.
 5. God will favor us as we render good service.
- ❖ However, rendering service has the following challenges, which we should not allow to discourage us so that we do not lose the blessings associated with giving service.
1. People may hate us.
 2. It may lead to death just like in the case of Stephen who was stoned to death and Jesus who was nailed on the cross.
 3. Service may cause us humiliation.
 4. People may betray us along the way. For example, Judas betrayed Jesus and Peter denied him.

JOSEPH RESPONDED TO THE CALL OF SERVICE

Joseph Was Sold To Egypt (Genesis 37:12-36)

He (Joseph) was the son of Jacob who was also called Israel. Jacob loved Joseph more than all of his brothers because he was the son of his old age. He bought many beautiful clothes for him among which was a coat of many colors. Because of this love, his brothers hated him. They hated him more when he narrated a dream he had to them. He said that in the dream, they were binding sheaves in the field, and his sheaf rose up and stood upright, while his parents and brothers' sheaves gathered around him and bowed down. This definitely means that he would reign over them.

Joseph also had another dream, which revealed that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. This meant that his father, his mother, and his brothers would bow before him. Jacob rebuked him when he narrated the dream to him.

On a particular day when his brothers went to graze their father's flock in the field, Jacob sent Joseph to them. As the brothers saw him, they planned to kill him. It was Reuben who suggested that they put him in a pit in Dothan. Joseph was later brought out from the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites then sold him in Egypt to Potiphar who was a captain of Pharaoh's guard. By the time, Reuben returned he could not find Joseph in the pit. When he was told that he had been sold, he was sad and he tore his clothes. The brothers decided to deceive their father about Joseph's fate. They took Joseph's robe and dipped it in the blood of a goat they killed. They told their father that a wild beast killed him. Jacob was very sad and he mourned the supposed death of his son.

Joseph Served In Egypt (Genesis 41:37:57)

Joseph did all his work well in Potiphar's house. Potiphar liked him and as a result, made him the head of his household. One day, the wife of Potiphar, wanted Joseph to have sexual intercourse with her, but Joseph did not fall to this temptation.

Potiphar's wife was annoyed with Joseph for refusing to have sex with her. She held his dress and Joseph fled leaving his dress in the woman's hand. When her husband returned, the woman used the dress to lie that Joseph wanted to force himself on her. Joseph was therefore put in prison. Joseph remained more responsible in prison. In prison, he was loved by the prisoners. He had the opportunity to meet Pharaoh's officials, the butler and the baker who were put in the prison because of some offences they committed.

Both of them had a dream and Joseph interpreted the dream for them. The butler was released from the prison as Joseph interpreted his dream and the baker was killed as Joseph interpreted his dream. Two years later when Pharaoh had a dream, the butler remembered Joseph who interpreted the dream that preceded his release from the prison. As none of the wise men of Pharaoh could give meaningful interpretation to the dream, he informed Pharaoh of Joseph.

In Pharaoh's dream, Pharaoh was beside River Nile where he saw seven healthy robust cows coming out of the river. There were other seven thin cows. The thin ugly cows then swallowed up the fat and robust cows. King Pharaoh also had another dream in which seven cobs of fat corn grew on one stalk. Again seven thin cobs of corn grew and swallowed the seven fat cobs of corn.

Joseph interpreted the dream that there would be seven years of the fruitful and plentiful harvest that will be followed by another seven years of serious famine. Joseph then advised King Pharaoh that he should store up plenty of food during the seven years of abundance so as to cater for the seven years when there would be famine.

Consequently, Pharaoh made Joseph a governor in Egypt to supervise the storing up of food in the time of plenty and share it carefully to make it last during the time of famine.

Joseph was committed to his duty and made sure the harvests were carefully stored. The famine actually came and it spread all over Egypt and Canaan. People came to buy food from Joseph and this brought a lot of money to the coffers of Pharaoh. Subsequently, people resorted to exchanging their land and animals for food. Joseph rendered true service to Pharaoh during the years of famine..

Lessons from the Service of Joseph

1. Joseph was talented in dreaming and giving an interpretation to dreams. He dreamt about his brothers and parents. However, the dreams landed him in trouble yet he was later freed because God who gave him the talent was with him, his dreams led him to greatness in the land of Egypt where King Pharaoh made him a governor.
2. Joseph had a forgiving spirit. He did not revenge the evil done to him by his brothers. He welcomed them and cared for them when they came to Egypt to buy food.
3. Joseph was a good planner and manager. He suggested that enough food should be stored up during the time of plenty so that there would be enough food during the period of famine.
4. Joseph was a disciplined, loyal and responsible servant. He refused to be lured into having unlawful sexual intercourse with the wife of his master.

RUTH SERVE HER MOTHER-IN-LAW

Elimelech and Naomi his wife had two sons called Mahlon and Kilion. They fled from Bethlehem due to famine and settled down in Judah. When Elimelech died, his sons married Orpha and Ruth. Both wives were Moabites. Orpha was the wife of Kilion while Ruth was the wife of Mahlon. After ten years of the stay in Moab, the two sons, Kilion and Mahlon died. Ruth and Orpha then remained with Naomi, their mother-in-law. Naomi wanted to return to her home in Judah when she heard that the famine there had ended. She then asked her two daughters-in-law to return to their fathers' house since their husbands had died.

Orpha left for her father's house but Ruth did not leave Naomi. Naomi requested her to go back to her father's house since she had no male child to take care of her. Ruth refused to leave Naomi and promised to follow her to Judah and serve her God. Ruth said Naomi's people shall be her people and her God shall be her God. Wherever she died she would die and wherever she was buried she would be buried. When they arrived in Judah, Ruth made provision for the feeding of Naomi and herself by going to the barley field to gather up some grains. This barley field belonged to Boaz who happened to be a relative of Elimelech, Ruth's father-in-law. Boaz was a very rich man. When he got to know that the woman who came to gather barley in his farm was Naomi's daughter-in-law, he was delighted and he encouraged her to come and glean the barley. Boaz also commended Ruth for staying with her mother-in-law.

Boaz honored Ruth by inviting her to come and eat with him at the mealtime and warned his servants not to mock her. Ruth was able to collect an impressive bunch of barley. This made Naomi happy. She had hope of a better future with Ruth staying with her.

Lessons from the Service of Ruth

1. Ruth was very reliable and considerate. She understood the condition of her mother-in-law and decided to stay with her. She bore the agony of the loss of her husband, yet she never left the mother-in-law who had earlier lost her husband too.
2. Ruth typified a hard-working, dedicated and dutiful woman. She was not dependent on others. She looked for food for herself and her mother-in-law. She was not ashamed of gathering barley in the field so that she and her mother-in-law could have enough food to eat.
3. Ruth was a consistent woman. When her mother-in-law asked her and Orpah to go back to their families after the death of their husbands when Orpah had left, Ruth did not go back and she resolved that she would stay and die with Naomi, her mother-in-law.
4. The consistency demonstrated by Ruth teaches us that it is not good to backslide. When we give our word, we should act according to our promise. She rendered a righteous service to Naomi.
5. Ruth was very loyal and respectful to her mother-in-law. All of us, either male or female must emulate the examples of Ruth.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Mention five (5) persons who rendered service to God in the bible.